

THE FOLSOM  
VIEW

“...HAVING THE EYES OF YOUR HEART ENLIGHTENED...” EPHESIANS 1:18

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## Attitudes Towards the Weak

BY BILL HALL

The Messiah's attitude toward the spiritually weak is pictured by Isaiah in the following words: “A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench” (Isaiah 42:3).

In our zeal for purity and strength in the church, we may be guilty of doing the very thing that our Lord does not want done. We create a mental image of what the ideal church ought to be, and then go about to establish one. Every member is going to attend every service. Every member will be “sound” in his convictions. Worldliness will not be tolerated. This church is not going to have the weaknesses that characterize other churches we know of. This is going to be a strong church, a model church.

A new convert is made, and immediately he is indoctrinated in what this church is, and the contribution he is expected to make to the maintaining of this ideal. Each newcomer is viewed as a potential threat. If he's not going to “line up,” we don't want him. Weaker members are handled with a “shape up or ship out” attitude. People soon recognize that there is far more concern for the image of the church as an organization than for them as struggling and weak children of God. While the Messiah is tenderly and delicately nursing the “bruised reeds” back to health, we may be there crushing them. While He cups His hand around these fluttering, dimly burning flames to protect what fire is left, we may be there quenching them.

We are not suggesting that unrepentant false teachers and immoral members ought to be tolerated. They must be warned, marked, and withdrawn from. Nor are we suggesting that the weak ought to be left alone in their weakness. They must be taught, encouraged, reprov'd, rebuked, and exhorted, but with all longsuffering, and with a view toward strengthening them. “Admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all” (1 Thess. 5:14). Ask not what they can do for the church but what the church can do for them.

As long as there is a little life in that “bruised reed,” there is hope. Don't crush it! As long as there is a little fire left, it might be fanned to burn more brightly. Don't extinguish it! This is not a problem confined to the matter of human institutions, either. When it comes to hospitality,

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some apparently think the same way, for when they have an opportunity to show true hospitality, they will gladly point the needy one to a hotel, or, in some cases, literally take them by the arm to talk to the elders or to the preacher because they see it as “their job,” not one of personal obligation.

And what about evangelism?

This attitude is seen often when this subject arises. Though many will not come right out and say it, their actions belie their true feelings: that is “the preacher's job.” Believing they have fulfilled their duty to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), they sit back and wait for “the preacher” to do it, never thinking about their own inactivity in this field. Some are offended when others say they are lacking in their responsibility to teach the lost, and will unashamedly point to their monthly report

about how much “they” are “paying the preacher” or how much “they” spent (as a local church) on advertising or tracts or Bible class material or radio ads or billboards or whatever source of communication to which “they” have contributed.

Brethren, it pains me to have to write this about us, but it is true, nonetheless. This is a shameful attitude that has prevented us from accomplishing the deeds that we, as individuals, should be doing and, worse, we believe we are actually doing it. While many Christians are out there taking this meaningful

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and urgent task upon themselves (as they should), many others are neglecting shirking their responsibilities and convincing themselves (and others) that “they” are really working hard to do all the things the Lord would have us do.

Let us not be confused as to our individual responsibilities, brethren. Not a one of us is going to get into heaven because someone else did what we were commanded to do or because we paid for them to do it. In the end, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). We will be judged for what we, as individuals, have either done or left undone (cf. Matt. 25:31-46). The consequence of this confusion will be lost souls. So, what are you doing?

VIA AUBURN BEACON

## Detached Members

BY FRANK L. SMITH

Perhaps the most quickly recognized illustration of a member of our body being detached is the retina, that part of the eye that receives the image and sends it through the optic nerve. When it becomes detached, that eye is unable to see.

Paul declared that we are all members of the body, if we are children of God, Christians (1 Cor. 12:18-20). And he further taught that all of the members must work for the well-being of the whole body (Eph. 4:16).

But we cannot function if we become detached from the rest of the body. That part of the body that is cut off, or detached from the body, can be no benefit to the body. An arm severed from the body can do no work for the one who has lost that limb. But neither can the body continue to supply life to the part that is detached.

Even so, members of Christ can neither serve him nor can he be a blessing to them, if they become detached from Him. A close association with the Lord in the body is necessary for the grace of God to save and bless us. Those members who have detached themselves from the church or have so lived as to have the fellowship with God’s people broken will die as surely as a severed limb. Jesus said, “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can you, except ye abide in me” (John 15:4). We cannot miss meeting and working with other saints in the church and bear fruit for the Lord. We must stay attached to His body in all things to keep our fellowship with Him, for He is the head of the body. ARE YOU WELL ATTACHED?

Let us keep well involved in worship, in teaching others, in study, in ministering to others’ needs to keep our lifelines connected securely. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

VIA AUBURN BEACON